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ABSTRACT

The experience of the Detroit (Michigan) public schools is used to offer a new interpretation of the decline of urban education in the 20th century, and ways are suggested to improve America's schools. Political, social, and financial influences have affected the formulation and development of educational policy in Detroit. The history of the school system is traced, focusing on the development of racial intolerance and separatism during the late 1960s, and the subsequent low points that undermined the quality of the school system and divided control between differing viewpoints. The ways in which the constant economic struggle strains the school system are explored, and the burden placed on the schools by social problems they cannot solve are reviewed. The six chapters are as follows: "'Beer and Pedagogy,' 1907-19"; "One of the Finest School Systems in the World, 1919-29"; "School Politics Divided, 1929-40"; "The Expansion of Conflict, 1940-49"; "The Rise of the Liberal-Labor-Black Coalition, 1949-64"; and "There Is Enough Blame for Everyone to Share." The answers to the problems of urban schools lie in returning to reforms that seek common ground, building coalitions among interest groups and government, and reestablishing trust between parents, students, and educators. An appendix contains 12 tables of statistics about the Detroit school system (SLD)

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